

Chairman's Report 2022/2023 AGM

WELCOME – and a special welcome to Cllrs Hamish Adorian, Tim Verboven and Linda Wade and to Gill Putterill (Headteacher). Our Guest Speaker, Felicity Buchan MP, the Member of Parliament for Kensington will be joining us at 7:30 straight from Westminster.

This New Year we received some very sad news. Christine Powell, who Chaired ECSRA for 10 years (and successfully applied for the Gold Standard Award - which was given to us by RBKC) passed away after a short illness. Christine was most recently our Membership Secretary. We all miss Christine and we remember her commitment, organisational skills, attention to detail and are grateful for the many years of service she gave to the community of Earl's Court Square.

As we gradually recovered from Covid, the importance of COMMUNITY has become even more important. As a Residents' Association, our focus remains on ways to enable community cohesion within the Earl's Court Square Conservation Area. Our catchment covers around 650 households and our aim for this year is to increase our membership from 116.

Membership of ECSRA now costs £10 (individual) and £15 (family/household) and enables us to fund refreshments and music at our events such as the "Lighting of the Christmas Tree", our AGM tonight - with wine and canapés - and helps pay for the DJ at our annual summer family BBQ/Disco. All residents are welcome to these events. However, they all need funding - and ECSRA membership fees provides this – so please make 2023 the year when the majority of the 650 households in our area join ECSRA - so we are able to continue providing events for our community.

EVENTS: During 2022 - ECSRA hosted 6 events – some of which were shared with the Garden Sub-Committee. Our AGM in February, held at The Bolton Pub, started the ball rolling with Guest Speaker, The Mayor of Kensington and Chelsea, Cllr Gerard Hargreaves, who brought along his splendid regalia to illustrate his talk on the role of the Mayor.

Then in March, Christine Powell and Sue Lupton led a "History of the Square Walk" when we all learned something new about the Square in which we live. (Do check our website under "Events" for their notes on the walk). During June we celebrated The Queen's Platinum Jubilee in the Garden with a brass band and a magnificent array of food - contributed by residents - whilst Katrina provided endless cups of tea in her eclectic collection of china teacups. And this year on 6 May at 4:30pm we propose following the same format to celebrate the Coronation of King Charles III.

Our annual BBQ/Disco was held in July which - was not as well attended as we hoped – so we have moved the date to Saturday 24 June this year to catch residents before they depart for their summer holidays as this event is our main fundraiser and used to finance our events.

We held an "Oktoberfest" in The Bottlery for ECSRA Members and their guests - and we're back at The Bottlery on 17 October for a "Members' New Orleans Jazz Evening". Our final event was, of course, "The Lighting of the Christmas Tree" in December. It's magical to see so many neighbours of all ages celebrating the festive season together - consuming Alan Malcolm's mulled wine, Katrina's 100 home-made mince pies and Mariaclara's home-made cookies – which the children love!

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR: Increased levels of ASB remain the main concern in Earl's Court Square. Most buildings have been affected by people squatting on door-steps - either buying or dealing drugs – particularly in the SE arm outside the Wetherby Mansions buildings - and there are an increasing number of residents who are very concerned about the increase in shoplifting on Earl's Court Road and are scared to walk on our streets. I'm pleased to report ECSRA has finally managed to get the Police to agree that an existing CCTV now points towards the Wetherby Mansions buildings in the SE arm - where most of the ASB incidents have been occurring – to monitor this area.

During 2022 ECSRA actively lobbied for more "bobbies on the beat" and co-authored a Petition (supported by 1000+ residents) drawing attention to the increased levels of crime in the area.

Our Councillors, led by the late Councillor Malcolm Spalding, spearheaded a "Call-to-Action" which was presented to the Council, who finally accepted that Earl's Court should be treated as a priority area, even though this is not reflected in recorded crime.

The Council's Leadership Team - working alongside Kensington MP Felicity Buchan - has put together a comprehensive Action Plan for Earl's Court - and in response to the Councillors' "Call-to-Action" - funded a month of action last December with the Borough Police resulting in:

- Extra police shifts - leading to additional closure orders on individual properties in Earl's Court. And I'm pleased to report another one has just been closed as a result of the recent ASB incidents in the SE Arm.
- RBKC conducted a series of street briefings, with Safer Neighbourhood Police Officers talking to residents about their concerns.

We would ask all our residents to always report crime, ASB and drug related activity online to the Police (contact details are in the magazine and on our website) or by calling 101 so their data will more accurately reflect the levels of crime we are all experiencing which, we hope, will lead to increased policing. **Please always call 999 in an emergency.**

ECSRA's Executive Committee recently viewed a presentation by a private security company, whose mobile units liaise closely with the Police, Council and local community. Although there are obvious advantages, it was felt that their costs would be prohibitive (as not all the buildings would be able to contribute).

I met with Cllr Cem Kemali last night to discuss our ASB problems. Cem has been appointed to lead an Earl's Court Task Force to drive through actions and improvements to reduce levels of crime and ASB as well as smartening up and boosting the Earl's Court area. He advised that the Council is looking at using private security or employing additional PCs (with the power of arrest) from the Mayor of London - to supplement policing within the Borough. I will keep Members advised on any progress.

CYCLE HANGAR: Despite some initial opposition, the cycle hangar located in the NE arm of the Square is filled with 6 cycles and has not been vandalised. There are 33 residents on the waiting list for a secure space for their bicycles and the Council has advised that they are willing to install 2 additional cycle hangars - using funding from Transport for London. The Executive Committee discussed this proposal at their last meeting and decided that we should canvass members' opinions on whether or not they want additional bicycle hangars in or around Earl's Court Square. I hope you have all received my recent email, setting out a number of questions, and we look forward to receiving your views either by email to ecsrachair@btinternet.com or for discussion today under "Any Other Business" at the end of this meeting.

PLANTERS IN THE SE ARM: The planters have been effective in blocking cycles and motorbikes from using the pavements to access Earl's Court Road which was dangerous for pedestrians but, due to inclement weather when they were initially planted, the plants have not flourished or grown to the height anticipated and we are proposing to replace them shortly with flowering shrubs - funded by monies from the Nicholson Fund. The on-going maintenance of the hanging baskets and the planters are generously funded by the residents of the Wetherby Mansion buildings via their service charges. ECSRA has, however, installed and funded a standpipe to aid watering and added spikes on the planters' edges to discourage people using them as seats and damaging the plants. I think everyone will agree that the plants in the planters have been a disappointment but please be reassured we are working on a solution which will visually enhance the SE arm of the Square.

FAÇADE RULES: After considerable work by the Residents' Association the Square was granted full Conservation Area status by the Council in 1975. One of its stipulations is that the buildings on the west, north and east sides **must be** painted a specific shade of **Magnolia** with woodwork **in white** but the colour of front doors is at the owners' choice. The colour for the house numbers is **Black** and typeface is **Garamond, 7 inches in height**. The latter detail is not in the Conservation Area Document but is something ECSRA recommended. Please keep our Square looking beautiful by advising your Managing Agents/Housing Association when they are re-decorating buildings that the Façade Rules are on our website <https://ecsraco.uk/facade-rules/>

EARL'S COURT SOCIETY SURVEY: The Earl's Court Society would welcome residents' views on the future of Earl's Court and particularly on The Earl's Court Development on the old exhibition site. Please do complete the survey on their website as they will be representing residents' views to the Council. ECSRA is a member of the Earl's Court Society. You should have received a letter from the Council inviting residents to a Development Forum on Thursday 16 March from 6pm-8pm at Refettorio Felix at St Cuthbert's, 51 Philbeach Gardens, when developers will present their proposals and local residents will be able to give their feedback before the developers submit their planning application.

SCHOOL TRAVEL PLAN: Residents have been concerned about parents double-parking at school drop-off/collection times and parents waiting for children who block the pavements. Langham Mansions has been particularly affected by children dropping litter on their steps and climbing on railings. ECSRA arranged a meeting with ECSRA/RBKC/School/Residents in November - to discuss residents' concerns. We now have a "School Travel Plan" in place which includes a "Hands Up Survey" showing how pupils travel to school along with an Action Plan that the School commit to undertaking in order to reach their end of year targets. It was interesting to note that in January 22 a total of 34 (23%) of pupils travelled by car. In July/December 22 - this dropped to 18 (11.9%). Their target is to reduce the %age of pupils travelling by car by 5% in 2022-23 and by a further 5% in 2023-2024. The school aim to increase the number of pupils walking, scooting, cycling or using public transport to and from school by 5% by July 2023 and by a further 5% in 2023-24. Once agreed, the "School Travel Plan" will be moved over to the digital STARS platform, which is utilized within the Borough, and targets, activities, issues and "Hands Up Surveys" will be recorded on the site and reviewed and assessed by the Council. And RBKC's Air Quality and Climate Change teams will also be undergoing a secondary Air Quality Audit at the school later this

term. We've asked for signage to be amended to show revised times to prohibit parking/stopping outside the school - to reflect extended school hours - and for "One Way" signs/road markings in the SW arm to prevent cars using this as an exit to Warwick Road. Both these issues are currently being assessed by the Council. I recently met with the school's new Chair of Governors (Carla Slaughter) and we hope that the problems in the SW arm can be resolved with a closer working relationship between the School and ECSRA and I would like to take this opportunity to thank Gill Putterill, the Headteacher, for her help with addressing residents' concerns.

BUILT-OUT BUS STOPS ON EARL'S COURT ROAD: ECSRA has been campaigning for the removal of the built-out bus stops on safety/pollution grounds. We are also seriously concerned about the impact on the emergency services of TfL's bureaucratic decision to retain them - which could well be life-threatening. Despite writing to TfL, involving our London Assembly Member, Tony Devenish, and highlighting our concerns and questioning their decision, their response was "following careful consideration of the consultation responses and the analysis of traffic flow monitoring data, the decision was made to make the build-outs a permanent feature and design work has now started on this." As we are all aware the works are now completed - and it's a fait accompli. I have a more detailed TfL response - which I'm happy to forward to anyone who is interested.

MAGAZINE: After 21 years of editing ECSRA's magazine - a lot of hard work behind the scenes to enable it to be self-funded and many hours chasing everyone for articles - taking photographs at events - and masterminding distribution to 650 households, Sue Lupton has decided it is time to call it a day so this magazine will be the last printed edition. We owe Sue a huge debt of gratitude and it is a tribute to her that the magazine has evolved over the years into its present form. The Committee has discussed the way forward and decided that, in future, "ECSRA News" will be emailed to [all ECSRA Members](#) twice a year - which we hope will also be a good incentive for everyone to join ECSRA! Sue will still be involved - and we're very excited about the future "ECSRA News" - which will also be on our website for non-members to view. I'm sure you will all join me in thanking Sue for 21 years of dedication and commitment to our ECSRA Magazine.

I would like to take this opportunity to say how grateful we are to our Ward Councillors, Hamish, Tim and Linda for their continued support. And a huge thank you to the Garden Sub-Committee - chaired by Katrina Quinton - for allowing us to use the beautiful Earl's Court Square Garden for our main events for another year - and to Stacy Bouvier for always promoting ECSRA membership to everyone who applies for a garden fob and Kevin Colgan - for cheerfully helping with our events.

Finally, I'd thank all my colleagues on the ECSRA Executive Committee for another year of Zoom meetings when we have lively - and sometimes heated discussions - but we always work together "to protect and enhance Earl's Court Square and the lives of the residents who live and work here."



Chrissie Courtney - Chair

Earl's Court Square Residents' Association.

A Gold Standard RA awarded by RBKC

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